were painted in colours of blood, or in robes of darkness. And let us observe how, in each of these pictures, there is the seizing of some real feature of the character of God, though fearfully distorted, and brought out with horrid prominence. Vulgar minds would ascribe all this to the priesthood, forgetting that the priesthood itself, so different in different nations, is the product, and not the cause, of the tastes and cravings of our nature—which it may yet, however, by reaction, greatly foster and augment. And why, of all people, should the ancient Hebrews be the only nation which succeeded in embracing all that is great and lovely, to the exclusion of all that is degrading and offensive? Ingenious minds may speculate as they please, but sound reason will ever most fondly rest on the belief in a supernatural communication as alone able to explain the phenomenon.

How totally different is the God of the Hebrews from the divinities revered by those who lived in the neighbouring countries, and in the same states of society! What a difference between Jehovah on the one hand, and Osiris, or Baal, or Jupiter, not to speak of Astarte, and Venus, and Bacchus, on the other! The characters differ, not only in degree, but they belong to a different class or order, and are without a single common virtue, except that suggested by an unpacified conscience, as it points to a God displeased with human rebellion and folly.

The God of Israel, on the other hand, is altogether different from the God of the philosophers, whether of the demi-civilized nations of the East, of ancient Greece and Borne, or modern Europe. It might be easy, we are aware, to cull isolated passages from Plato, Cicero, and Seneca, in which there appear to be wonderfully enlarged views given of the Divine nature: but when the whole theology of these authors is taken in its combination, we find the select quotations to be utterly deceptive. Take

Greece and Borne in their ripest periods, and examine their boasted " disciplines." The Epicureans removed their gods far above the care and supervision of human affairs: in short, as Cicero says, "admitted their existence in words, but denied it in fact/'* The Academics may be regarded as represented by Cicero: they delighted in discussing everything, but they believed little. The Peripatetics habitually overlooked Divine things, and their views of God are acknowledged to be miserably meagre and

* Verbis ponunt, re tollunt Deos.—De Nat. Deor.